

estore pre-
icaba onel
iglo II, ipon
que no hay?

God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be common. And it is monstrous for one to live in luxury, while many are in want. How much more glorious is it to do good to many, than to live sumptuously! How much wiser to spend money on human beings, than on jewels and gold! How much more useful to acquire decorous friends, than useless ornaments? Whom have lands ever benefited so much as conferring favours has? It remains for us, therefore, to do away with

Miguel
y
Banderas

San Tom
plor y
obispo

ylas
mujeres
tambien

Hispanic Protestantism: Historical Reflections

David Maldonado

Who, then, will have the more sumptuous things, if all select the simpler? Men, I would say, if they make use of them impartially and indifferently. But if it be impossible for all to exercise self-restraint, yet, with a view to the use of what is necessary, we must seek after what can be most readily procured, bidding a long farewell to these superfluities.

!?

Reseñas bibliográficas

In fine, they as girls' gewgaws, rejecting adornment itself entirely. For they ought to be adorned within, and show the inner woman beautiful. For in the soul alone are beauty and deformity shown. Wherefore also only the virtuous man is really beautiful and good. Ariel Zambrano

Raúl Fernández Calienes

Daniel R. Rodríguez-Díaz

Apunte bibliográfico

down as a dogma, that only the beautiful is good. And excellence alone appears through the beautiful body, and blossoms out in the flesh, exhibiting the amiable comeliness of self-control, whenever the character like a beam of light gleams in the form. For the beauty of each plant and animal consists in its individual excellence. And excellence in man is righteousness, and temperance, and manliness, and godliness. The beautiful man is, then, he who is just, temperate, and in a word, good, not he who is rich. But now even the soldiers wish to be

Reflexiones

el Antiguo?

teológicas

"With childish folly to the war he came,
Laden with store of gold."¹

But the love of ornament, which is far from caring for desde but claims the body for itself, when the love of the beautiful has changed to empty show, is to be utterly expelled. el

¹ Ibid., ii. 872.

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Hispanic Protestantism: Historical Reflections

David Maldonado

As we approach the 500 Anniversary of the so-called discovery of America, a popularly held belief is that Protestantism is an insignificant phenomenon in the Hispanic community.¹ The popular view is that Hispanics are Catholic; that their history is Catholic, and that their culture is intimately bound to the Roman Catholic Church. It has been common to dismiss Protestantism in the Hispanic community as an exception to the Hispanic experience. The perpetuation of such a belief not only reduces and simplifies the task of social scientists and other students of Hispanic history and culture, but more importantly, it is misleading regarding the significance of Hispanic Protestantism. This essay suggests that Protestantism is, in fact, not an exception to the Hispanic experience, but rather an important phenomenon in understanding the religious history of Hispanics and the impact that the Anglo presence has had upon this population. This essay explores a framework for understanding the emergence of Protestantism among Hispanics, the current dynamics between Hispanic and Anglo Protestants, and a foundation for understanding the appeal of liberation theology themes among Hispanic American Protestants.

Protestant Hispanics have been historically misunderstood. Perceived as exceptions to the Hispanic norm, their motives for affiliating with Protestant denominations have been interpreted in unfavorable ways. For example, some have suggested that Hispanic Protestantism is the result of self-interest of those persons involved,² and the desire to acculturate into the Anglo world.³ Underlying such opinions seems to be a cultural assimilationist assumption, that these Hispanics, out of self-interest, are intentionally breaking with their Hispanic culture in efforts to acculturate and assimilate into the Anglo world. Such interpretations simply view Hispanic Protestantism as a psychological, economic, or cultural phenomenon at the individual level. This paper proposes a broader and more historical perspective treating Hispanic Protestantism as the product of systematic social, political, and institutional efforts by the Anglo Protestant Church as it expanded into the present Hispanic Southwest.

As Hispanic Protestants reflect critically upon their history and current situation, they have begun to interpret the work of the Anglo Protestant Church among Hispanics as part of a larger cultural and political expansion which has left the Hispanic population in a subordinate position to the Anglo. The spirit of such

1. For example, in *Aztlán: An Anthology of Mexican American Literature*, edited by Luis Váldez and Stan Steiner, one chapter is devoted to the church, "XII, La Causa: God and Church." Yet, not one word concerns the Protestant Church; instead, it deals solely with the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Hispanic experience. The implication is that the Protestant Church is insignificant.

2. Manuel Camio, *Mexican American Immigration to the United States*. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), p. 117.

3. William Madsen, *The Mexican Americans of South Texas* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 64.

critical analysis is not one of condemnation, rejection or denial, but rather one which attempts to understand the broader historical context and dynamics which have shaped the emergence of the Hispanic Protestant church.

For the purposes of this paper, the Mexican and Mexican American experience will be used to illustrate current critical thought among Protestant Hispanics in general. It is important to note, however, that other Hispanic American populations (Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central American) have unique historical experiences. This paper does not suggest that the Mexican model is the most representative; it is used merely because of convenience.

Religious Base

A mere glance at the Native American origins of Hispanics will reveal a deeply religious people. The impressive religious edifices and the wealth and power of religious leaders which greeted the invading Spaniards, were merely the symbolic "tip of the iceberg." What Cortés saw was symbolic of the deeply religious nature of the Native American spirit, and the intimacy between religion and Native American society. Mesoamerica was a world penetrated by religion. Although composed of historically diverse peoples with a great variety of religious conceptions, the Aztec Empire was in the process of synthesizing diverse religious beliefs and forms under the Aztec religion.⁴ In fact, the basic religious nature of the Native American and the religious base of Native American societies, may very well be a key factor in the development of the Aztec empire. Aztecs were able to unify religious symbols and forms, and use these for the purpose of control and authority. The Aztec state was fundamentally military and theocratic. The heads of the Aztec political empire were not only military leaders, but also led the religious order. Such was the society and spirit which the Spanish encountered and upon which they imposed their Christian religion.⁵

The Catholic Imposition

The above interpretation of Native American society as fundamentally religious in nature and form explains why Mexican Roman Catholicism can be viewed as a religious imposition upon an already religious people. The Catholic faith was "superimposed upon an original and still-living religious base."⁶ Some have referred to this historical event as a "spiritual conquest." There are several important points to note here. First, Roman Catholicism was introduced into a religious society already in the process of religious synthesis. The Aztec Empire was symbolic of the unification of diverse religious forms; thus, the introduction of Catholicism, while abrupt and initially harsh, occurred within a context of social religious development. Secondly, the introduction of Catholicism into the Native

4. Octavio Paz. *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961).

5. Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 24-30.

6. Paz, *Op. Cit.*, p. 92.

American world was indeed a forced intrusion, nonetheless.⁷ The religious temples and symbols of the Native Americans were intentionally destroyed and forcibly replaced with Catholic symbols.⁸ Even Ricard, who is exceptionally favorable in his description of the Spanish conquest, suggests that the Spanish powers engaged in overbearing conversion practices. These observations are made of the Spanish Catholic imposition, not to pass judgment, but to show that precedents had already been set for the Protestant movement among Hispanics much later and further to the north. Here, too, we will see a religious intrusion upon an already religious people.

Coming as the official church of the Spanish state, along with the corresponding powers and favors, the Catholic Church enjoyed a privileged position in the colonial system. It was natural for the Catholic Church to play a commanding role in the development and maintenance of colonial "New Spain." Not only were Catholic priests the leaders of explorations, but they soon became the harvesters of the fruits of such activity. The Church became wealthy and powerful. It became a major landowner, a money-lending institution, and the center of community life.⁹ The church was a major part and instrument of the colonial structure and power. It developed intimate allies in the ruling classes, economically and politically, while maintaining a paternalistic relationship with the poor and powerless masses.

The Catholic State During the Protestant Entry

The Catholic Church was interested not only in its own expansion and the Christianization of the Native Americans, but also in the expansion and maintenance of the Spanish empire. Thus, it was the appropriate institution for exploring and settling the northern fringes of the Spanish lands. The product of these efforts are the strings of missions found in California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas. These efforts, while heroic, were destined to frustration. Under the Mexican church administration, these missions had their headquarters in Mexico City, a long distance resulting in their isolation in the northern frontiers. Their remoteness made communication, support, and maintenance extremely difficult. Another problem that developed was the lack of priests to administer these missions. On top of this came the secularization of the missions, which completed their deterioration. The string of missions became a string of shells.

Mexican independence, the general anticlerical spirit in Mexico, the secularization of the missions, and the geographical isolation of the northern Mexican settlements had a great effect on the condition and role of the Catholic Church in Northern Mexico. By the mid 1800's, the church had suffered near

7. C. MacLachlan, Rodríguez, *The Forging of the Cosmic Race* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

8. Hernando Cortez, "The Destruction of the Aztec Temples: I Overturned the idols," *Aztlán: An Anthology of Mexican American Literature*, ed. Luis Váldes and Stan Steiner (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 379-381.

9. MacLachlan, *Op. Cit.*

extinction as an institution in California.¹⁰ Huge missions and vast regions were served by a very small number of priests with limited resources. The result was a population Catholic by tradition and commitment, but commonly separated from the meaning and practice of Catholicism and church membership. This essay is not to argue the weakening of Catholicism among Mexicans in the northern colonized regions. Catholicism continued to be a cultural, spiritual, and social force in the lives of Mexicans. The purpose is to show the lack of strong institutional support, protection, and cultivation of that religious identification. Mexicans were "nominal" Catholics, yet nonetheless Catholics.

The Protestant Phenomenon

The above section describes the Catholic Church in the Southwest as weak and unable to fulfill its ecclesiastical duties. Yet, this does not in itself explain the emergence of the Protestant Church among Hispanics in what is now the Southwest. The Hispanic Protestant phenomenon has its origins in the interaction of historical, institutional and social factors. These will be briefly discussed in the following order: 1) the institutional vacuum (California), 2) reaction against American Catholicism (New Mexico), 3) anticlericalism (Texas), 4) a general anti-institutional reaction of a deeply religious people, and 5) the systematic institutional efforts to convert the Mexicans as part of the Anglo expansion and colonization.

Institutional Vacuum

The general weakness and near collapse of the Catholic Church is best illustrated in the conditions it faced in California. In 1846, Bishop García Diego wrote: "San Solano, San Rafael, San Francisco, San Antonio, San Juan Capistrano, etc., are without . . . funds, without tithes, without priests and without hope that any may want to come, since they are aware how these fare who are here, without schools, and without the means to establish them. In short, without anything upon which to base hope, it is impossible to advance and so the diocese is on its way to destruction."¹¹ The general absence of the Catholic clergy, and the inability to minister to its scattered flock, left an open door to other religious institutions.

Alienation From Church Hierarchy

With the American expansion into the Southwest and the forceful annexation of Hispanic communities into the United States, the administrative affairs of the Catholic Church were likewise transferred to American jurisdiction. The isolated Mexican Catholic Churches, instead of being responsible to church headquarters in Mexico, were transferred to the jurisdiction of the American church headquartered in the far Northeast. Needless to say, the transfer of jurisdiction placed Mexican Catholics under the administration of Anglo church bureaucracies

10. Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 214.

11. Leo Grebler, Jean W. Moore and Ralph G. Guzmán, *The Mexican American People* (New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 451.

which were not acquainted with Mexicans, much less understood their situation. Mexican Catholics had developed their own Christian traditions. The American version of Catholicism under the strong influence of the Irish was probably almost as foreign as Anglo Protestantism. In fact, Catholicism in the United States was so Anglo, that one of the first tasks that the Catholic Church established was the Americanization of Mexicans.¹²

The impact of the transfer from Mexican to American jurisdiction of Mexican Catholics, is best illustrated by events in northern New Mexico. Dissatisfaction with and criticism of the Catholic Church soon became public, even among native Catholic priests. For example, it seems that a Catholic priest, Father Jose Antonio Martínez, the curate of Taos, emerged as a vocal critic of the Catholic church¹³ and either voluntarily resigned from the priesthood or was excommunicated. His son, Vicente Martínez, became an important protestant leader among Hispanics in the region.¹⁴ Lamy, the new American Bishop, also excommunicated another priest, Father Gallegos, who had become a community leader of native New Mexicans.¹⁵ It was evident that the leaders of the American Catholic Church were defenders of the new establishment, were insensitive to the style of religion among New Mexicans, and were perceived as oppressive. The result was the alienation between New Mexican Catholics and the American Catholic leadership.

It was precisely the alienation described above that set the stage for the first Protestant sermon ever preached in Spanish in the Southwest. The preacher was an ex-priest, Benigno Cárdenas who had become dissatisfied with the Catholic Church and offered to serve among the Spanish-speaking people under the auspices of the Methodist Church. Accompanied by Anglo officials, Cárdenas returned to Santa Fe and publicly announced that he would preach in the local plaza on November 20, 1853, as a Methodist minister.¹⁶ In frustration and rebellion, Cárdenas attacked the Catholic Church and openly declared his acceptance of the Protestant faith.

Anticlericalism

The early colonial history of Mexico is intimately related to the role and status of the Catholic Church. It has already been shown that New Spain and later Mexico developed from the beginning as socio-political structures founded upon the alliance between the church and the wealthy class. The church became the symbol of the dominant establishment, concentrated wealth, and control over the minds and life of Mexico. But, Mexico has likewise witnessed a resistance, and at times, an open rebellion against the wealth and power of the church and clergy.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 451 ff.; see also Pitt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 216.

13. T. Harwood, *History of New Mexico Spanish and English Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Albuquerque: El Abogado Press, 1908).

14. Justo González, *The Theological Education of Hispanics* (New York: Fund for Theological Education, 1988), pp. 57-58.

15. Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publisher, 1968), pp. 118-19.

16. Alfredo Nájiz, "Protestantism Among Mexican Americans in the Southwest," (unpublished paper presented at the pre-symposium on Mexican Americans, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, 1972).

This was to be most evident in the War of the Reformation whose goals were to destroy feudalism, to establish constitutional government, and to limit the wealth and power of the church (Ley Lerdo, 1856).

Such was the background for the emergence of the first Mexican Methodist minister in Texas, Alejo Hernández (1824-1875). A student for the Catholic priesthood, Hernández became anti-clerical and anti-Catholic because of the role the church had played during the French invasion. This man is symbolic of that movement away from the Catholic Church. In fact, he voluntarily crossed the U.S.-Mexican border in search of Protestantism and especially its literature *Noches con los romanistas*. After some preaching in Mexico, Hernández was appointed by the Methodist Church to start the work of the church with Mexicans in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1871.¹⁷ Hernández is representative of a long discontent among Mexicans with the clerical leadership and structures of the Catholic Church.

Religious Protest

A fourth factor in the emergence of Hispanic Protestantism could be described as a purely religious protest. This phenomenon is not unique to Hispanics, but has been observed as a recurring cycle in the long history of the Christian Church. Specifically, this refers to those "protests . . . direct, on the one hand, against the excessive expansion of the ecclesiastical body with its accompanying compromises and modifications and, on the other, against individual shortcomings and defaults of leaders of a complacent body."¹⁸ This type of protest can be characterized as a reaction against the perceived institutionalization of religion, and an emphasis upon a more vigorous interpretation of the religious life. Thus, protesting persons react against the institution by becoming more "religious." The forms of protest can be either individualistic or collective, temporary or permanent, remaining within the institution or withdrawing.¹⁹

The Hispanic heritage is deeply religious; thus, it is not surprising to see Hispanics active in the revitalization of religion. These have expressed their religious protest in many ways. The *Penitente* movement in New Mexico is one expression; others responded to the perceived institutionalization of their faith by developing their own centers of private worship at home, or by living their own type of religion and merely dropping out of church.²⁰ Yet, some began to look beyond or were directly approached, in the midst of their search, by other religious institutions such as the Protestant Church. The Protestant church offered an alternative to religious protestors disillusioned with clericalism and institutionalism. Initially, the Hispanic religious protest tended to be individualistic. This early movement away from the Catholic Church tended to be by individuals acting on

17. Alfredo Náñez, "La vida de Alejo Hernández: primer ministro metodista mexicano," *The Texas Methodist: Rio Grande Conference Edition*, (March 5, 1971), p. 1.

18. Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 156.

19. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Vol. I & II. (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 331ff.

20. Cleotes Vigil, "I believe in God. But not in priests!" Stan Steiner, *La Raza* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 341.

their own, and was not a collective withdrawal en masse. As individuals were "converted" to the Protestant faith, these individuals tended to seek each other and to form religious collectives. The mainline Protestant denominations provided resources (funds, literature, personnel, and property) to these religious groups. The first collectives of Hispanic Protestants developed under the auspices of traditional Protestant churches including the Methodist, Presbyterian, and American Baptist Churches.

Today religious protest continues not only against the Catholic Church, but also against the institutionalized Protestant churches. Modern protest, focusing on individualistic piety, mysticism, anti-clericalism and institutionalization tend to be represented by the Pentecostal groups, and other independent churches. A very common phenomenon is also the total withdrawal from any formal church participation or the refusal to identify with any type of religious group by many young Hispanics today.

Hispanic Reflections

Up to this point, this essay has dealt mainly with the religious history and experience of Hispanics and their ancestors. It has focused on the historical role of the Mexican Catholic Church, and on the experiences of isolation, conflict, disillusion, and withdrawal. It would be immensely misleading to stop at this point. To do so would give the impression that the emergence of Hispanic Protestantism was due strictly to the history and nature of the Catholic Church. On the contrary, the Catholic Church has never totally abandoned or pushed away its Hispanic communicants, but has claimed them as its historical and legitimate children. In fact, even today, many Hispanics although not active in worship or church activities, still identify with that church. The spiritual, historical, and cultural bonds remain. This essay proposes that Hispanic Protestantism needs to be understood also as the consequence of a systematic process of Anglo cultural, political and religious expansionism. This was an intentional effort of the Anglo Protestant Churches to move into the Hispanic population for the purpose of "converting" individuals to the Protestant faith.

As Hispanic Protestants review their history, several elements emerge which have helped them understand historical and current dynamics. Four major themes can be identified: 1) Anglo expansionism, 2) Cultural Impact, 3) Anglo Control, and 4) Racism and Cultural Attitudes.

Anglo Expansion and Imposition

As Hispanics within the Protestant faith reflect upon their religious history, the historical contact and relationships between Anglos and the Hispanic populations take on special significance. To a large extent, Hispanic Protestants readily recognize that they are a product of that contact and interaction. They accept the religious heritage from the Protestant Church (embodied in Anglo Church) and continue that tradition of faith and worship. However, Hispanic Protestants also understand themselves to be part of and intimately identify with the history and experiences of the various Hispanic peoples in the United States and Latin America. Their sense of peoplehood binds them to the conditions of Hispanics over time and space. It is with such sensitivity that Hispanic Protestants point to

the historical fact of Anglo military and cultural expansionism into the Hispanic world. This refers to the aggressive extension of Anglo dominance and control witnessed during the last century and a half. During that historical period and in the belief of manifest destiny, the United States expanded its boundaries at the expense of its Latin American neighbors through war or the threat of war. This resulted not only in the Anglo acquisition of land and political power, but also domination over residents of newly conquered territories.²¹

In essence, Hispanic Protestants have begun to identify with a Hispanic perspective of history which perceives the Anglo as expansionist and aggressor in a relationship which has left the Hispanic populations in a position of subordination. Anglo Americans are perceived as having forced themselves upon the Hispanic populations and imposed their culture as the normative culture, especially religion.

This first theme serves as a background for understanding how many Hispanics perceive Anglo action and presence. It also has some very definite implications for the Protestant emergence among Hispanics. Following our focus on the Hispanic southwest, Anglo invaders were directly responsible for the presence of Protestantism within these geographic areas; Anglos brought their form of religion with them. Mexicans, who prior to the Anglo presence lived in an essentially homogeneous Catholic society, were now exposed to an aggressive Protestant presence. This factor is very important historically for the emergence of the Hispanic Protestant church. Hispanics became a mission target of Protestant missionaries. Protestantism was made accessible and easily available as an alternative expression of religious faith or as a form of protest. Anglo Protestant leaders were ready to support Mexicans who were willing to develop Protestantism among the Spanish-speaking. For example, Father Benigno Cárdenas through the efforts of the Reverend Enoch C. Nicholson was provided financial and moral support in establishing Spanish work in New Mexico. Likewise, in Texas when Alejo Hernández crossed the border, he had no difficulty in finding Protestant literature (which had been brought to Texas by American soldiers specifically to distribute among the Mexicans), or in finding Anglo support to begin Protestant work among the Mexicans. The Anglo Protestant hierarchy quickly recruited him and sponsored his labors.²²

Another powerful consequence of the forced annexation is that the Mexican Southwest suddenly became the "home turf" (home mission field) of the Protestant churches. With annexation, the Protestant church became the dominant church. The Southwest became a legitimate territory for Protestant work. The Spanish-speaking population became the target of the Protestant churches. These churches rapidly developed a persistent sense of mission -to bring the Protestant faith to these conquered and religiously "deprived" people.

21. Joan Moore, *Mexican Americans* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 11-30.

22. Alfredo Náñez, *History of the Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1980).

Cultural Impact

The second theme concerns systematic efforts to influence the basic world view, life styles, and social organization of the Hispanic populations. This type of effort was observed of the Spanish as they established their colonial dominance over the Aztecs. A very similar process is suggested as occurring when Anglo Protestants established their domination over the Hispanic populations. In observing colonializing peoples and their domination over subordinated populations, Robert Blauner suggests that the "impact on the culture and social organization of the colonized people . . . is more than just a result of such 'natural' processes as contact and acculturation. The colonizing power carries out a policy which constrains, transforms, or destroys indigenous values, orientations, and ways of life."²³ This observation points to acts of the colonizers to affect the culture and social organization of the colonized in such a way as to leave little doubt that the transformation of the colonized was due to any other factor than the intended intervention of the colonizer. Two general forms of Anglo Protestant activities reflect this type of intentional intervention: 1) missionary activities, and 2) settlement house and educational efforts.

The first type of Anglo activity which was clearly and openly recognized as an attempt to change Mexican Americans was that of "missionary" work. Referred to as "evangelization" by Protestants and "proselytism" by Catholics, this activity was basically one of trying to "convert" the Catholic Mexican to Protestantism. Anglo missionaries came into the Southwest specifically to "Christianize the Mexicans." Needless to say, these missionaries were well supported by Anglo Protestant churches in the United States.

This type of activity relied chiefly on preaching, religious literature dissemination, teaching, and personal persuasion. It is interesting to note that Alejo Hernández came across anti-Catholic literature in Spanish which was brought into the Southwest by the invading American military forces in 1847. This literature was supplied by the American Tract Society of New York to the American army specifically to be distributed among Mexicans.²⁴ Although the first missionaries were Anglos, the task of converting the Mexicans eventually involved other Mexicans. Again, these first Mexican missionaries had the full support of the Anglo community. For example, when Jose Policarpo Rodríguez (1829-1914) was converted by another Mexican (Santiago Tafolla, who was himself converted by Anglos, served in the American armed forces in the Civil War, and studied in Georgia) Rodríguez decided to become a Methodist minister. Immediately Anglo administrators recruited him and provided the supportive resources so he could "minister" to the Mexicans.²⁵ Thus, in converting the Mexicans, the Protestants utilized the army, the press, Anglo missionaries, and even other Mexicans.

The second type of Anglo activity intentionally aimed at culturally changing the Mexican was social work. Fundamentally, two types of institutional work

23. Blauner, *Op. Cit.*

24. Nánéz, "Protestantism Among Mexican Americans in the Southwest," *Op. Cit.*

25. Abel Gómez, "Jose Policarpo (Polly) Rodríguez," *The Texas Methodists, Rio Grande Edition*, (April 9, April 23, and April 30, 1971).

developed: 1) settlement houses, and 2) schools. It is suggested that these activities were aimed at acculturating the Mexicans and "Americanizing" them into good citizens. "Christianization" and "Americanization" were synonymous, or as Sumner says, "the two processes can scarcely be separated."²⁶ In other words, the churches did not seem to differentiate between social work and evangelism. Both were clearly aimed at transforming Mexicans into good Christians and good Americans.

The settlement house movement was transplanted into the Southwest by the church. The directors of the centers were missionaries under appointment of the church. These tended to be deaconesses (single Anglo women) who settled in the barrios and with the full financial backing of the Anglo church and community slowly developed their programs of socialization and acculturation. Major emphasis was given to transforming the individual. Programs such as American citizenship classes, English lessons, and vacation Bible schools were clearly methods of socializing Mexicans into the American society. Funds were secured from Anglo churches and other private sources because of the good work of the centers in helping the Mexicans "adjust" to America. Obviously, these institutions were set up, not to advocate Mexican American rights and to change the social, political, and economic structures of the larger Anglo society, but to change the Mexican Americans themselves.

Educational institutions were also established in the Southwest by the Methodist Church and other denominations.²⁷ These emerged in such cities as San Antonio (The Wesleyan Institute), El Paso (Lydia Paterson Institute), Laredo (Holding Institute), Albuquerque (Harwood), and Los Angeles (Latin American Institute). Most of these schools were originally intended for the purpose of preparing young Hispanics for the Protestant ministry, but eventually expanded to teach English to Mexicans.

In regards to impacting the daily life, culture and social life of Hispanics, Madsen²⁸ and González²⁹ suggest that the entry of Protestantism into the Mexican American society has caused division and mistrust between Protestant and Catholic Hispanics. Mexican American Protestants, in spite of their ethnic identification, were led to develop different social and personal customs. For example, many Protestants withdrew from participation in many Mexican customs and activities such as fiestas, and developed pietistic lifestyles. Much of this new lifestyle was intended to demonstrate their conversion. Protestantism stressed individualistic attitudes and drew people away from the community and into the church (almost every night for a meeting and religious services). The American Catholic Church also contributed to division within the Hispanic community. In the Catholic Church's effort to "protect" its Mexican flock, it cultivated mistrust, fear, and conflict among Mexican American Catholics toward Hispanic Protestants. In other

26. Margaret Sumner, "Mexican American Minority Churches, USA," *Mexican Americans in the United States*, ed. John H. Burma (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc. 1970), p. 226.

27. Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp.220 ff.

28. Madsen, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 62-67.

29. Nancie L. González, *The Spanish-Americans of New Mexico: A Heritage of Pride* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 77.

words, through the emergence of Protestantism, Hispanic cultural values, practices, and orientations were impacted, and division and conflict developed within this ethnic community.

Administrative control

A third theme observed by Hispanic Protestants is that of their being controlled or managed by Anglos. Again, Blauner's observations are useful: "Colonization involves a relationship by which members of the colonized group tend to be administered by representatives of the dominant power. There is an experience of being managed and manipulated by outsiders in terms of ethnic status."³⁰

In spite of the fact that generally Mexican American Protestants belong to Mexican American congregations, Anglos have historically been in the powerful denominational positions of management in relationship to Mexican Americans. While they have their own congregations and pastors, in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (bishops, staff and boards of national policy and funding agencies), Hispanics are grossly underrepresented if at all. For example, in the United Methodist Church, while Mexican Americans have their own annual conference (Rio Grande--Texas and New Mexico), that conference has never had a Mexican American bishop. Only since 1984 has there been a Mexican American bishop in all of the United States.

The same can be said about community centers (settlement houses). Established by Anglo missionaries, the first Hispanic director did not appear until the late 1960s. Traditionally, the church's community centers have been directed and staffed by Anglo professionals or Anglo volunteers. It has not been until recently that Mexican Americans have functioned as executive directors. Even now, the boards of directors of these centers continue to be predominantly Anglo. On the national level (Community Centers Division) Hispanics continue to have no representation on the staff.

As Hispanic Protestants reflect on their history and situation, the theme of being managed by Anglos is especially clear. Among Hispanic United Methodists, this is especially true in Arizona, Colorado, and California. Outside of Texas and New Mexico, the feeling of being marginal and of lacking self determination is pervasive.

Racial and Cultural Attitudes

A final theme within the history of Hispanic Protestantism is the experience of racism and ethnocentric cultural attitudes. "Racism is a principle of social domination by which a group seen as inferior or different in terms of alleged biological characteristics is exploited, controlled, and oppressed socially and psychically by a superordinate group."³¹ This fundamental characteristic of Anglo attitudes toward Mexican Americans can be observed in two phenomena of the Protestant Church's record among Hispanics: 1) history of racial distinction and separation, and 2) Anglo Protestant sense of racial superiority. "By the time of the

30. Blauner, *Op. Cit.*.

31. *Ibid.*

Mexican War, America had placed the Mexican firmly within the rapidly emerging hierarchy of superior and inferior races. While the Anglo-Saxons were depicted as the purest of the pure - the finest Caucasians - the Mexicans who stood in the way of southwestern expansion were depicted as a mongrel race, adulterated by extensive intermarriage with an inferior Indian race.³² Unfortunately, the history of Anglo-Hispanic relations in our society and within the church has been a story of racial tension, separation and even conflict.

No matter how much Hispanic Protestants have been described as anglocized and acculturated, it is an historical fact that to become a Protestant does not mean automatic acceptance into the Anglo world. Accepting the Protestant faith does not result in social integration or racial assimilation. Mexican American and Anglo Protestants remain divided along racial lines. They continue to reflect the racial realities of the external environment. This is especially true at the congregational level. The fact that Mexican American families will drive past two or three Anglo Protestant churches in order to reach the Hispanic Protestant Church across town, points to not only their desire to worship in Spanish, but to the persistent racial reality. Hispanics and Anglos worship once a year in a "fellowship" service, but become strangers the remainder of the year. Separate ministerial alliances also reflect the continuing gap between these "brothers in the faith." While some may claim that the separation between Anglo and Hispanic Protestants may be merely due to the language needs of the Spanish-speaking peoples, and some may affirm (rightly) that Hispanics prefer to be with Hispanics, nevertheless the question whether this separation is not really due to racism hangs low over the heads of all Protestants, especially Hispanics.

The second phenomenon is that of "Anglo cultural supremacism." A perceived arrogant spirit led Anglos to believe that their culture (including religious orientation) was superior to the Mexican. Since the very first, Anglos have expressed an ethnocentric attitude of supremacy. David T. Leary does an excellent job in surveying the writings of Anglos that express this specific attitude.³³ As Anglos came into the Southwest and observed the Mexicans (as very ignorant and degraded, plus timid and irresolute), the Anglos claimed supremacy both racially and culturally.

The spirit of supremacism was also reflected in the attitudes of Protestant missionaries. As stated before, they described Mexicans as near pagan, papist and "un-Christian," thus in need of moral education. Because Mexicans were perceived as low and backward, the Anglo missionary sincerely believed that the Mexican could be "improved" through Anglo influence; Mexicans needed improvement, thus the missionary challenge! The Anglo perceived the task to be that of regenerating and ameliorating the Mexican American people and culture. Fundamentally, this is a form of ethnocentrism and cultural prejudice.

32. R. Horman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

33. David T. Leary, "Race And Regeneration," *The Mexican Americans: An Awakening Minority*, ed. Manuel P. Servin (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1970), pp. 13-27.

Hispanic Protestant Affirmation

A definite swing toward critical historical analysis of the Hispanic experience and of the Protestant Church among Hispanics can be observed both within and outside church circles. For example, Barrera³⁴ surveys the historical experience of Chicanos through the colonial model, and Orozco³⁵ offers a critical analysis of Protestantism, especially of its historical portrayal of Mexican Catholicism. Within Hispanic Protestant circles, *Apuntes* which has emerged as an excellent instrument of theological and historical reflection, documents an increasing critical perspective among Hispanics. As we prepare for the 500th anniversary of the European discovery of the Americas, intense critical reflection has begun regarding the social, political, and religious history of Hispanic Americans. Needless to say, the church, Catholic and Protestant, will come under greater historical scrutiny over the next several years.

Along with such reflection, there is a strong movement among Hispanic Protestants to identify with the various Hispanic communities and situations throughout the world. Protestant churches are not known as waystations toward acculturation, but authentic communities of Hispanic Christians with a commitment toward their people. To take on and proclaim the Protestant faith is not to deny one's history, culture or struggles and realities. On the contrary, the Christian message of liberation becomes very real and powerful to Hispanics. For many Hispanics, their Protestant faith is a third generation experience, and thus is part of their heritage. It does not call them to break from their communities. In fact, as members of Hispanic Protestant churches, they worshiped in the midst of Hispanic barrios, and experienced the same marginality and problems as the rest of the Hispanic population. The issues of the Hispanic community were their issues, too. Thus it is natural for Hispanic Methodists to be advocating within the United Methodist Church in the name of and for the sake of the broader Hispanic community. Hispanic Methodist ministers and laypersons increasingly identify with and are intimately involved with local community affairs, immigration issues, racial concerns, and other Hispanic and minority struggles. At the same time, within the church, Hispanic American Protestants are affirming their culture through the use of Spanish and developing church literature in Spanish and reflective of Hispanic culture. No longer is Protestantism viewed as an alienation from the Hispanic community, but rather as one authentic expression of the Hispanic experience.

There is definitely a movement in the Hispanic Protestant church. Hispanics are laying claim to their Protestant faith, to full participation in their Protestant denominations and to the struggles and issues of their communities as well. In efforts to gain participation in decision-making process of the wider church, plus a greater role in managing their own affairs (self-determination), Hispanic Protestants have developed national caucuses within their respective denominations. For example, United Methodists have formed MARCHA (Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa Hispano Americana), a national

34. Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest* (Norte Dame: University of Norte Dame Press), 1979.

35. E. C. Orozco, *Republicanism in Aztlán*, (The Petereins Press, 1980).

caucus which has been officially recognized by the United Methodist Church as a voice for Hispanic Americans and has been able to gain resources and power to influence the role of the church among the Spanish-speaking across the nation. Other Protestant denominations have also experienced the organization of Hispanic caucuses. Identification with and concern for issues affecting the Hispanic community can be documented in positions taken by the Rio Grande Annual Conference beginning with the grape boycott of the 1960's, immigration legislation debates, English Only Amendments and Central American issues.

Concluding Remarks

The objective of this essay has been to present Hispanic Protestantism from a different perspective. Instead of seeing it as insignificant and as isolated cases of acculturation, Hispanic Protestantism has been surveyed as a significant socio-political and historical phenomenon which provides insights to broader Anglo-Hispanic relations and history. The perception of Hispanic Protestants as acculturated and assimilated is countered by the Hispanic Protestants' claim to their ethnic identity, culture, and empowerment, as well as by their commitment to the issues and struggles of the Hispanic peoples in the United States and In Latin America.

In conclusion, as Hispanic Protestants reflect critically upon their past, the colonial model offers penetrating insight. The process of colonialization becomes associated with Anglo expansion into the Southwest, and the religious efforts of Protestants are viewed as an integral part of that larger process of colonizing the Hispanic populations. The components of colonization have been outlined as conquest, cultural and social change, control by the dominant group, and attitudes of racial and cultural superiority. It is suggested that these elements can also be observed in the history of Protestantism among Hispanics, and that Hispanic Protestants have begun to reflect critically upon their history through such a perspective. With such a framework, it is not surprising that Hispanic Protestants increasingly identify with the colonized and the oppressed.³⁶ Thus, the themes of liberation and pluralism become the new signs of hope and vision.

Resumen

En el presente artículo se repasa del historia del cristianismo México-americano, mostrando cómo ha habido una sucesión de conquistas en las que la religión de los conquistadores ha impactado la religiosidad del pueblo. Así, lo que sucedió con la llegada del protestantismo anglo fue semejante a lo que sucedió anteriormente con la llegada del catolicismo español. Los principales componentes de la colonización son la conquista, el cambio cultural y social, el dominio por parte del grupo conquistador, y las actitudes de superioridad racial y cultural. Todo esto ha estado presente en el desarrollo del protestantismo México-americano, como lo estuvo también en el desarrollo del catolicismo mexicano.

36. Ignacio Castuera, "The Theology and Practice of Liberation Theology in the Mexican American Context," and L. Nieto, "The Chicano Movement and the Churches in the United States," *Perkins Journal*, (Dallas: Perkins School of Theology, 1975).

Reseñas bibliográficas

Raúl Fernández Calienes

Moisés Sandoval, ed., *Fronteras: A History of the Latin American Church in the USA Since 1513*, Volume 10 of the *Historia General de la Iglesia en América Latina*, Enrique Dussel, ed. (Mexican American Cultural Center: San Antonio, Texas, 1983). 470 pp.

Fronteras is indeed "a milestone in the story of 'el pueblo en marcha'" (p. vii). The book is truly groundbreaking, yet sadly it is also flawed. The first of its kind, it challenges the Hispanic American community to read of its own past, to discover new elements of its own identity, and to expand upon this first effort toward a history. It presents the origins and growth of the Hispanic American Church, and makes the case that this church is alive and well and ready to make significant contributions to the life of this country. It describes the sometimes turbulent developments of Hispanic American faith, as well as some of its more exciting and life-giving expressions. Yet, surprisingly, it virtually excludes the significant and life-giving impact of such groups as women and youth. It also exudes a sense of ethnocentrism which is unnecessary to say the least.

Done as a part of the massive effort by the *Comisión de Estudios para la Historia de la Iglesia en Latinoamérica* (CEHILA --Commission of Studies for the History of the Church in Latin America) to write a new general history of the Church in Latin America, the present volume centers on Hispanics in the USA. Other issues in the series (e.g., volumes 4-6 on the Caribbean, México, and Central America) will complement this one by giving important historical information on the people who make up the ever-growing and ever-changing Hispanic population of the USA.

This volume deals with the early "mission" efforts, the daily life of the church and of the people, the conflicts and difficulties of the early era, as well as the more recent migrations of peoples. It includes such varied and interesting titles as: "The Age of Turmoil," "Effects of World War II on the Hispanic People," "The Church and El Movimiento," and "The Latinization Process."

The work attempts to cover the many complex and interrelated elements that make up the Hispanic American community: (1) it covers almost five centuries of history --from 1513 to the present day; (2) it deals with the vast geographic area in question --from Florida to California, from Ciudad México to Chicago; (3) it encompasses the many, richly different ethnic groups in this country --Mexicans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and many others; (4) it recognizes the various socio-economic streams of Hispanic American reality --farmworkers, migrants, braceros, immigrants, etc.; (5) it includes some of the different religious traditions --it has a major section on "The Protestant Presence," which helps to fill-in the broader picture of Hispanic faith. Attempting to cover these elements is no small task! The work is clearly a first effort, yet it does manage to achieve some of its goals within the limitations of a single, concise volume.

The book is edited and therefore, as expected, the depth and quality of the individual articles vary. Some of the pieces are excellent while others are not. In fact, there are a number of significant problems with the book.

First of all, in some of the articles there is a very clear pro-Hispanic bias. That is, some of the authors go on at length about how Hispanics have been oppressed, while at the same time denying or minimizing Hispanic involvement in the oppression of Native American Indians. No one will deny that Hispanics have been oppressed in this country --to do so would be absurd. But, to deny that we as Hispanic people had a part in the oppression and destruction of the real Indigenous Nation(s) on this continent is downright evil! As Hispanics in this country, we cannot continue to play the victims at the cost of truth and justice for our sisters and brothers who have been our victims. We must recognize our own sinful past, acknowledge the damage done, and take concrete steps to correct the present and future. We must actively claim the more "distasteful" parts of our own history. Thus, statements like the one by Luciano C. Hendren, in the chapter "Daily Life on the Frontier," are almost inconceivable in this kind of work:

In the long run, [Hispanic] missionary institutions, in spite of some of the abuses, were, it seems, much more favorable to and for the Indian. The alleged cruelty of the Hispanic colonizers, whether military or missionary, toward the Indian is much too overplayed. Their successes, on the other hand, are downgraded. (p. 105)

We must surpass the "divide-and-rule" mentality that has been placed upon us and that we have so readily absorbed. We must acknowledge our own history, and we must work together towards true justice.

Secondly, there is a very clear Roman Catholic bias. While the work was sponsored and published by the Mexican American Cultural Center, and while almost all of the authors do have some kind of Roman Catholic "connection," and while there is indeed included a major "Protestant" section, there nevertheless remains a feeling of "all Hispanics are Roman Catholics" (or at least they should be). Constant references in the contemporary sections to proselytism, the "faithful," "the" church, etc., give the non-Roman Catholic reader a sometimes vague and sometimes jarring feeling that they are being "unfaithful" and that they should return to "the" church. In the ecumenical spirit of the entire series of which this volume is a part, a bit more tolerance would have been helpful.

Thirdly, there is a very clear patriarchal bias. The significant contributions of women in anything other than subservient roles is virtually ignored.

Fourthly, and in a completely different vein, there are a vast number of editorial errors --typos, grammatical faults, printing mistakes, etc. Disclaimers, like the one found in the Epilogue by world renowned author Dr. Enrique Dussel, do not excuse poor editing (i.e., we must consider "the limited material resources and the generosity of the authors who have carried out the task without remuneration"). The errors became very annoying, though I must admit they did have a very unexpected outcome: I paid much more attention to detail than I normally would have because I had to keep the context in mind to understand the

sentences. (In spite of its positive effects, I sincerely doubt that this is sound educational methodology!)

Lastly, there are no indexes. The book is virtually impossible to use as the critically important reference work it is, since finding a person, name, place, or event means thumbing through literally hundreds of pages of material. Hopefully indexes will be included in any later editions of this work.

Thus, to conclude, the work is a valuable albeit flawed beginning effort toward a history of the Hispanic American Church. It stands as a challenge to the Hispanic American Church to look at its own history, to learn and repent and change its ways (in more than one dimension!), and to continue to reach out to the poor and oppressed amongst us, working toward life-giving liberation for all of us!

Apunte bibliográfico

Maestros y Profetas: Documentos Oficiales de la Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña (Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña, 1989). 425 pp.

La Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña rinde un valioso servicio a todos aquellos interesados en la realidad borinqueña al publicar, en un solo volumen, los documentos y las declaraciones emitidas por el colegio de obispos de Puerto Rico en los últimos veinte años.

Esta publicación recoge varios documentos y declaraciones de tipo doctrinal y pastoral. En los mismos, es evidente la preocupación por los obispos puertorriqueños de orientar, enseñar y dirigir al pueblo católico romano de Puerto Rico hacia una fe viva e integral que responda a las necesidades de este pueblo de acuerdo al espíritu del Concilio, tal y como ha sido interpretado por los susodichos obispos.

Maestros y Profetas contiene cuarenta documentos o declaraciones. Los temas cubiertos por los mismos son sumamente variados y reflejan la rica tradición que les respalda. Algunos de los temas discutidos por los obispos son: la incineración de cadáveres, la crisis económica de la isla, pastoral sobre el lugar de María en el plan salvífico, el ecumenismo, la ayuda a Nicaragua, las elecciones, el aborto, los refugiados haitianos, el padre Charles Curran, la opción preferencial por los pobres, y el ayuno y abstinencia. Como podrá notarse a base de esta breve lista, los obispos se han pronunciado sobre un gran número de temas que se relacionan estrechamente con algunos de los problemas que confronta la sociedad puertorriqueña. Se les ha prestado mucha atención a temas relacionados con el aborto y la planificación familiar; aunque encontramos también numerosas discusiones político-teológicas.

Todas las declaraciones y los documentos tienen una marcada orientación pastoral. El libro también contiene el mensaje papal a los puertorriqueños.

Lamentablemente, la declaración de los obispos sobre el plebiscito fue pronunciada después de publicado el libro. Pero copia de la misma puede obtenerse por medio de *El Visitante de Puerto Rico*, el semanario oficial de la Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña.

En fin, en esta obra hallamos una valiosa colección de materiales que resultan esenciales para comprender una parte significativa de la realidad de nuestro pueblo puertorriqueño. Pueblo que actualmente se encuentra envuelto en un momento sumamente significativo para su historia: la determinación de su status político por medio de un plebiscito para el año 1992. Durante este proceso, los líderes religiosos de la isla —ya sea católicos o protestantes— tienen, y tendrán, una función primordial en la creación de la conciencia política del pueblo. Aunque no todos los habitantes de Puerto Rico comparten la opinión de los obispos católicos, en cierta medida podría utilizarse los documentos de la Conferencia de Obispos de Puerto Rico como barómetro del futuro social, político y religioso de la isla.

Javier Quiñones Ortiz

H. Mc Kennie Goodpasture *Cross and Sword: An Eyewitness History of Christianity in Latin America* (MaryKnoll: Orbis Books, 1989). 314pp.

Daniel R. Rodríguez-Díaz

Uno de los grandes retos que hoy se tienen que enfrentar en la historiografía latinoamericana y caribeña, es la reconstrucción de la historia enfocada desde la perspectiva de los pobres. Por quinientos años ésta ha sido prerrogativa de los que han mantenido el poder. Estos han construido una teoría de la historia donde se da por sentado que hay unas culturas inferiores en oposición a otras que son superiores. Con un esquema como éste se ha estructurado toda la sociedad. La iglesia cristiana, sea ésta católica o protestante, ha estado siempre en el centro de esta concepción.

Afortunadamente, a través de esos quinientos años en la América Latina y en el Caribe siempre se mantuvo vivo otro entendimiento de la historia. En esta región encontramos alianzas entre europeos, criollos, y nativo-americanos, en la lucha por transformar las condiciones materiales, y luego pasar a un común entendimiento de cómo construir la nueva sociedad. La historia, como la vivieron los pobres, sirvió como centro de interpretación para construir la otra historia: aquella que abarcaba la sociedad global así como la de la Iglesia con principios de justicia y respeto a la vida.

El libro de Goodpasture, *Cross and Sword*, se inscribe en la segunda tradición historiográfica. Desde una hermenéutica de liberación busca la reconstrucción de la historia del cristianismo en América Latina y el Caribe. Usando el método de la antología ha seleccionado ciento dieciocho testimonios de personas que vivieron la experiencia, o fueron testigos de ellas.

El autor comienza con una porción del diario de Colón, 1492, y cierra su antología con el testimonio de un ministro luterano en el año 1983.

La selección es impresionante. Dejando a un lado la versión oficial de la historia, Goodpasture investiga entre los mismos participantes representados por mujeres, hombres y niños, cómo entendieron los eventos ocurridos.

Por supuesto, hay que tener mucho cuidado de no caer en la trampa de creerse que los hechos hablan por sí solos. Este es un problema metodológico del que hay que cuidarse siempre. Las antologías en especial se prestan para este tipo de error.

Goodpasture en su antología usa una periodización en tres partes, las cuales reconoce elaboró gracias a los trabajos de CEHILA (Comisión de Estudios de Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina). El autor la dividió de la siguiente manera:

I. Cristiandad hispánica de las Indias, 1492-1808

II. La agonía de la cristiandad colonial y la presencia protestante, 1808-1962

III. Las iglesias y la liberación latinoamericana, 1962-1985

La selección de documentos cubre cada uno de esos grandes períodos. El autor integra muy bien los documentos seleccionados, con breves comentarios de los eventos históricos más importantes de la época. Además se asegura que los escritores(as) estén enlazados con las fechas del testimonio, así como con el marco

histórico. El autor asegura de esa manera, que la narración mantenga su integridad y frescura.

Goodpasture no se propuso trabajar con una tesis general, aunque sí logró trabajar con éxito varios temas que actuaron como hilo conductor para que se diera un entendimiento específico de la historia de la Iglesia en América Latina y el Caribe. El mismo señala algunos de esos temas en su epílogo: el papel de las iglesias católica y protestantes en el establecimiento del sistema colonial y neocolonial, la falta de cierta confianza de parte de ambos sistemas misioneros hacia el liderazgo autóctono, la resistencia en ambas Iglesias para contextualizarse en el medio latinoamericano y caribeño (p. 293).

Así como hubo debilidades que fueron importadas de Europa y los Estados Unidos, encontramos fortalezas, tales como la presencia de algunos profetas: hombres y mujeres, dispuestos a hacer verdad el Evangelio en las tierras de las Américas. Gracias a la respuesta responsable de un remanente, "establecieron iglesias y comunidades de creyentes, y se dedicaron a pensar críticamente sobre la Iglesia y a reformar aquellos mismos vehículos que originalmente habían traído el testimonio" (293).

En resumen, en la antología de Goodpasture, podemos encontrar los testimonios de mujeres, hombres y de un niño, de lo que han sido temas centrales en las luchas latinoamericanas y caribeñas por la justicia. Podemos también ver la búsqueda de una fidelidad al Evangelio, hecho que produjo una reacción en las instituciones eclesiales. Estas encontraron que esa búsqueda atentaba contra su proyecto de cristiandad.

Usando como andamiaje la periodización elaborada por el historiador y presidente de CEHILA, Enrique Dussel, el autor logra establecer, para los estudiosos(as) de la historia, bases documentales muy ricas para continuar la tarea de recuperación de nuestra memoria histórica.

Esta antología es útil para el entendimiento de la historia del cristianismo desde América Latina y el Caribe. Es además muy relevante para que las instituciones eclesiales de Estados Unidos y Europa se miren a sí mismas desde el prisma de aquellos pueblos que fueron objeto de su evangelización. Puede serlo aún de la manera más significativa para el pueblo latino de Estados Unidos. Es de vital importancia comprender la historia latinoamericana y caribeña de los pasados quinientos años para poder asegurar la sobrevivencia como pueblo. De este modo, la visión que se va forjando del futuro será también informada por nuestro pasado histórico.

David C. White *Jesús y los de abajo, según Lucas* (México, D.F.: Ediciones CUPSA, 1990). 127pp.

Ariel Zambrano

El Dr. David White, uno de esos misioneros que llevan lo hispano profundamente metido por dentro, nos acaba de entregar un libro que es, al mismo tiempo, manjar para el espíritu y carbón encendido que quema la conciencia. No necesita explicar mucho la perspectiva de su análisis del evangelio de Lucas; cuando dice *Los de abajo*, nos lleva inmediatamente, como de la mano, a la novela clásica de la revolución mexicana por Dn. Mariano Azuela. La novela de los campesinos pobres, de los hesheredados, de los que prefirieron tomar el fusil o el machete a seguir sufriendo las injusticias de los malos gobernantes y de los caciques sin alma.

Si el Dr. White no vivió la revolución mexicana sí se adentró muy hondo en el alma hispana mientras él, su esposa y sus hijas misionaban por tierras de Chile, Cuba y México, teniendo la oportunidad de enseñar y predicar en varios países de la América Latina. Si el que esto escribe recuerda bien, al autor de *Jesús y los de abajo*, escribió su tesis doctoral sobre la obra de José Ortega y Gasset, lo que le permitió empaparse del espíritu hispano desde el principio de su carrera.

Pero esto que hemos dicho no es una simple presentación de credenciales del autor o una manera de decir que tiene capacidad para escribir un libro como el que nos ofrece. Nó, leyendo el libro nos damos cuenta de que, aún si no conciéramos a su autor personalmente, nos convence desde la primera página de que tiene algo nuevo que decirnos sobre el Evangelio de Lucas. Su nueva manera de comprender este evangelio nos la presenta el Dr. Justo L. González en su prólogo a esta obra, en donde nos habla de la singular hora que nos ha tocado vivir: los años finales del siglo XX. Esta hora crucial puede ser identificada como la época del *redescubrimiento de las Escrituras*, y, afirma el Dr. González, comparando este acontecimiento con la Reforma del siglo XVI, ésta resulta de menor importancia.

Karl Barth y su generación abogaron por un regreso a las Escrituras, y el Segundo Concilio Vaticano puso la Biblia en las manos del pueblo católicorromano. Ahora, más que nunca, la Biblia es el libro del pueblo. Y aquí es en donde el libro del Dr. White hace su impacto. Hoy la Biblia se lee en los barrios bajos de nuestras ciudades y en los jcales y en los bohíos de nuestros campos; allí, hombres y mujeres han recibido su mensaje, pero dentro de su circunstancia, usando el pensamiento de Ortega, que para la mayoría de los hispanoamericanos viene a ser un apropiarse de las Escrituras *desde abajo*.

El Dr. González tiene un párrafo que clarifica nuestra idea: La Biblia, en fin, no es tanto un libro a ser interpretado, como un libro que ha de interpretarnos a nosotros. Es un libro que nos dice dónde estamos en esta historia de la creación y de los propósitos de Dios, y cuál ha de ser nuestro papel en el día que nos ha tocado vivir (p. 14).

En *Jesús y los de abajo* se nos ofrece una herramienta para estudiar la Biblia desde dos perspectivas: desde *abajo* y desde *adentro*, abajo indicando la condición humana y adentro refiriéndose al hecho, que debe ser céntrico en todo estudio de

la Escritura: debemos permitir que la Palabra de Dios nos presente la Palabra. Esto lo podemos ver claramente si consideramos el índice del libro, simplemente el título de los capítulos: I. Un nuevo orden de relaciones humanas; II. Con los de abajo: Al igual que su madre; III. Los enfermos: Dios prescribe salud integral; IV. Las mujeres: trato equitativo; V. Los niños: también son personas; VI. Parias o marginados: aceptados; VII. Los enemigos: ¿ganarles o ganarlos?; VIII. Los perdidos: todos incluidos; IX. La oración: fundamento de una vida entregada a los demás; X. El Espíritu: fuente de poder y de una agenda orientada hacia los demás; XI. ¿Quién es Jesús? la respuesta divina; XII. ¿Quién es él? nuestra respuesta.

Con la organización del libro en los capítulos indicados el Dr. White ofrece al ministro y al laico un rico acervo de materiales, porque el libro puede ser usado por el ministro como base para una serie de sermones sobre el evangelio de Lucas o, tomando en cuenta el abundante número de citas bíblicas que se indican y cómo ellas nos llevan de la mano explorando ideas y situaciones en el evangelio, puede ser guía para una serie de estudios bíblicos los domingos por la noche o en algunos de los grupos de la iglesia. Los laicos de nuestras congregaciones no tendrán dificultad en dirigir ellos mismos estos estudios, si estudian el libro con cuidado. Esto es lo que todos deberíamos hacer, estudiar el libro cuidadosamente, lo que resultaría en un ejercicio profundamte espiritual que nos beneficiaría grandemente.

No quisiera concluir esta reseña sin antes mencionar una idea que me parece es el meollo del libro. En las primeras páginas el Dr. White nos hace ver que, de hecho, el evangelio de Lucas es revolucionario. Nos dice claramente: Para Lucas, Jesús ha volteado cabeza abajo todas esas dimensiones de la vida que atañen al mundo de las relaciones humanas, (p. 18). Me agradan estas palabras porque me recuerdan la traducción de Phillips de Hechos 17:6, cuando los cristianos han llegado a Tesalónica y el pueblo se alborota, con lo que los líderes van a las autoridades con la noticia: "Estos que trastornan al mundo entero también han venido acá". Phillips traduce: *These... have turned the world upside down*, que es exactamente el punto que enfatiza el Dr. White. Lucas pone a sus lectores concienzudos cabeza abajo; ésta es la posición que debemos tener si queremos hacer una exégesis correcta de la Biblia.

Aquí tenemos un buen libro que, si lo leemos con cuidado, nos trastornará y nos pondrá cabeza abajo, pero al final nuestro Maestro y Señor nos colocará sobre nuestros pies y nos mostrará nuevas formas de servicio en su reino aquí en la tierra.

